



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**



Indian Education Division
Montana Office of Public Instruction
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Council Grove State Park Indian Education For All Lesson Plan

Title

Council Grove: Site of the Hellgate Treaty

Content Area(s)

Social Studies; Media Literacy

Grade level

4th

Duration

1-2 Hours

Goals (Montana Standards/Essential Understandings)

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 1: There is great diversity among the 12 tribal Nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 4: Reservations are land that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties and was not “given” to them. The principle that land should be acquired from the Indians only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions:

I. That both parties to treaties were sovereign powers.

II. That Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land.

III. That acquisition of Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 7: Under the American legal system, Indian tribes have sovereign powers separate and independent from the federal and state governments. However, the extent and breadth of tribal sovereignty is not the same for each tribe.

Social Studies Content Standard 4: Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.

Speaking and Listening Content Standard 4: Students identify, analyze, and evaluate the impacts of effective speaking and evaluative listening.

Reading Content Standard 5: Students gather, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of sources, and communicate their findings in ways appropriate for their purposes and audiences.

Overview

In this lesson, the students will learn that:

- Native people, like the Salish, the Kootenai and the Pend D' Oreille, lived in the valleys and mountains of Western Montana for thousands of years.
- These areas were recognized by the native people as a land of abundance, a land rich in natural resources and a diversity of plant and animal species. It should also be recognized as a cultural landscape, managed and maintained by the native peoples who have lived in the region for generations.
- Reservations are land that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties and was not “given” to them. The principle that land should be acquired from the Indians only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions:
 - I. That both parties to treaties were sovereign powers;*
 - II. That Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land; and.*
 - III. That acquisition of Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists.- from ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 4*

The students will learn that non-native people:

- Came to the Western Montana for a variety of reasons;
- Brought with them their own cultures (attitudes and values);
- Interacted with the native population resulting in cooperation and conflict (Hellgate Treaty); and
- Adapted and/or created technology within a new environment.

Students will:

- Learn that maps of the state provide a variety of information, including the location of Indian reservations, transportation routes and important communities.
- Learn how to interpret maps of local communities, including native communities, and the state.

Students will:

- Appreciate and value the cultures and traditions of various peoples
- Appreciate and value Montana's diversity

Suggested Teaching Approaches

- Involve students in the planning of learning experiences about the Indian tribes of Western Montana. These planned experiences may include: the gathering of information about the native people of western Montana, a visit to Council Grove State Park to look at the Memorial sign (treaty and traditional stories) a visit to the Peoples Center in Pablo Montana, simulation activities, and role playing. Compose questions related to these topics. Make plans for accessing, organizing, and presenting information.
- Use of literature material, biographies of the local people, and oral histories is encouraged.
- Information may be organized and shared in a variety of ways, including: maps, graphs, charts, posters, pictures, dioramas, models, displays, interviews, and stories.
- Develop, with the students, a timeline while discussing briefly what was happening in Europe and the rest of North America at the time the Hellgate Treaty negotiations were being held.
- Learn about ways Indian helped the explorers, fur traders, and early settlers to the western Montana.

Materials or Resources Needed

- Background Information (provided in lesson plan – Attachment B)
- Student notebooks, pencils/pens, paper, classroom board
- Computers, Internet, word processing program
 - Internet access to the following websites.

www.cskt.org/documents/gov/helgatetreaty.pdf

(Text of Hellgate Treaty)

www.cskt.org/hc/salishculture.htm

(History of the Salish people of Montana)

http://fwp.mt.gov/news/article_2964.aspx

(Article about Mrs. Mary Ann Toppseh Combs of Arlee was the last surviving member of the Salish Indian band of about 250-300 people forced in 1891 from the Bitterroot to the Jocko valley to the Flathead Indian Reservation)

www.fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors/HTML/Articles/2005/CouncilGrove.htm

(Flathead reservation history and the Hellgate treaty – attachment A)

www.missoulian.com/articles/2005/08/14/news/local/news06.txt

(150th anniversary of the Hellgate Treaty- attachment C)

www.missoulian.com/articles/2003/10/05/news/local/znews06.txt

(Interpretive Sign at Council Grove State Park- attachment D)

www.canadiana.org/hbc/stories/aboriginals1_e.html

(How the native people helped the early explorers and traders)

Activities

Use the maps to determine information students already know about Indian Nations in Montana. (Reservations) This information could include location, demographics, communities etc.

Teacher, rather than telling the students the above information, might want to plan an activity where students do some of their own research to find the above answers. The resources listed above would be helpful for students to gain a fuller understanding of the impacts of the Hellgate Treaty both historically and today.

Using a map of western Montana and the text of the Hellgate Treaty, have students determine the locations of the “proposed” reservations, discuss the advantages/ disadvantages of each. (see attachment E)

After students have obtained the basic knowledge about Montana’s Indian Nations, and the Hellgate Treaty, have students work in groups to determine how life changed for the Indian people after the treaty was signed. What was positive?, What was negative?, and how does the Treaty affect life today?

Notes for teachers

It is important to recognize that Treaties are constitutionally protected, government-to-government agreements creating long-term, mutually binding commitments. This is important because treaties, like the Hellgate Treaty, recognized and acknowledged the sovereignty of the native participants.

Native Americans were unfamiliar with the concept of private property. They owned some items individually, but land generally was not something “owned.” When the settlers claimed great expanses of land, the Native Americans could not understand—there was so much land to share. To the settlers, the ownership of property was important and had been for centuries. Their goal was to put the tribes on reservations and lay claim to the lands of the West themselves.

One of the reason the federal government wanted to create reservations was to secure lands for a railroad and for settlers. But the tribes did not want to leave the lands they and their ancestors had inhabited. Communication was also a big problem in making treaties. Tribes (each with their own language) were forced to rely on translators to negotiate for them.

- Ask groups to make a short (5 minute) presentation of their finding to the class, encourage questions and comments from students.

EVALUATION:

Discussion/observation

Participation

Classroom presentation

Extensions

Invite a tribal member from the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe to your classroom to learn about tribal history and the Hellgate Treaty.

Check out these great books to learn more about the tribes of the Flathead reservation.

Coyote stories of the Montana Salish Indians by Johnny Arlee
Salish Kootenai College Press , 1999.

Stories From our Elders

Salish Culture Committee Publications

In the Name of the Salish & Kootenai Nation

Bigart,, Robert, Clarence Woodcock ed. Salish Kootenai College Press 1996

Indian Trails of the Northern Rockies

Flanagan, Darris - Stoneydale Press

Websites

www.anamp.org/nescp_curriculum/pdf/FlatheadOverview.pdf

Good historical overview of the Flathead Reservation

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flathead_Indians

Encyclopedia source

Attachment A

The Treaty Lives On

by Daryl Gadow

Council Grove State Park commemorates “the place of tall trees with no limbs,” where Indian tribes reluctantly gave up most of their homeland 150 years ago.

A pileated woodpecker flies up into the gnarled, broken crown of a centuries-old ponderosa pine. Like those of other ancients nearby, the pine’s lower limbs have long rotted and broken off. In the Salish language, this site along the Clark Fork River, 10 miles west of Missoula, is known as chilmech—“the place of tall trees with no limbs.”

The woodpecker moves from tree to tree in search of insects, drumming a staccato beat on the tall trees’ trunks. A century and a half ago, a similar sound emanated from among the old sentry pines at what is today Council Grove State Park. They were the echoes of drums, and they signaled a solemn occasion. Somewhere near the present park, in the summer of 1855, nearly 2,000 members of the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d’Oreille tribes gathered to meet with Issac I. Stevens, governor of Washington Territory. There, they negotiated a treaty that would forever change the Indians’ lives.



*This story is featured in
Montana Outdoors
November/December 2005*

“We had a good way of life before the treaty, where everything was in order,” says Johnny Arlee, a Salish tribal elder and cultural advisor for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes’ Health and Human Services Department. “The treaty took away our homeland and a social system that worked for us.”

Father Adrian Hoecken observed that Indian society firsthand. A Jesuit priest present at the treaty council 150 years ago, Hoecken wrote letters describing the scene of the historic treaty negotiations.

“Indian warriors from all the tribes of the great Flathead Confederacy rode over the plains and mountains to a powwow with Governor [Stevens]. . . .” The rendezvous, he wrote, “lay along the flats of a wide, swift river swollen from recent summer rains. It was a biannual battleground of Blackfeet and mountain Indians, the passageway through the Rockies called the Gate of Hell. . . . There, under a clear sky and ringed by mountains, with the prim military tents of the whites facing the humbler Indian teepees, the Flatheads [Salish], Kootenais, and Pend d’Oreille fought a stubborn diplomatic battle for their ancestral lands.”

On July 16, 1855, after a week of contentious negotiations, leaders of the three tribes reluctantly signed an agreement with the U.S. government. Called the 1855 Treaty of Hellgate, the agreement altered the course of history in western Montana.

Relinquish a homeland

The treaty set the stage for ending the tribes’ seasonally mobile way of life. For thousands of years, the Indians had moved around the region to sites rich in plants and wildlife important for medicine and food. But by signing the federal document, the tribes relinquished to the U.S. government the bulk of their aboriginal homeland, an area of about 21,000 square miles (most of today’s western Montana). The three tribes, which the treaty combined into what became known as the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, also agreed to consolidate on a 2,000-square-mile reservation in the Flathead Valley.

Stevens, the U.S. government's ambitious 37-year-old representative, had clear orders from the nation's capital to settle the "Indian question" in Washington Territory. Under Stevens's direction, the route for a railroad to the Pacific Coast, which would open the door to increased white settlement, had been surveyed in 1853 and 1854. It

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crossed lands long inhabited by several American Indian tribes, which at the time were considered by the U.S. government as independent, sovereign nations.

Stevens was charged with weakening that sovereignty and doing it quickly. In 1854, he concluded a treaty with several tribes in the Pacific Northwest. The following year, he set out to do the same with other tribes in the region, including those in today's northwestern Montana.

Different expectations

According to Robert Bigart, co-editor of *In the Name of the Salish and Kootenai Nation* (a textbook on the Hellgate Treaty used by Flathead Reservation school districts), the tribes that gathered at Council Grove in 1855 had vastly different expectations for the treaty council than Stevens did. The tribes expected to receive assurances that the U.S. government would provide protection from their old enemy, the Blackfoot Tribe, in their common buffalo hunting grounds of eastern Montana.

"The tribes thought they would talk about arranging peaceful access to the buffalo herds," says Bigart, director of the Salish Kootenai College Press. "But Stevens was there to get the Indians onto a reservation and open up a transportation route to the West."

Stevens grouped the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille together as a single "confederacy," even though the three tribes had significantly different homelands and customs. The Salish homeland was centered in the Bitterroot Valley, the Kootenai lived in today's northwestern Montana, and the Pend d'Oreille's ancestral home was in the Flathead Valley and the country to the west. A small area around Missoula was the only territory shared by all three tribes.

The Indians were surprised when the territorial governor's treaty proposed to place the three tribes on one reservation. Not surprisingly, they disagreed over the location. Alexander, chief of the Upper Pend d'Oreille, and Michelle, chief of the Kootenai, favored the Flathead Valley reservation site. But Salish chief Victor resisted Stevens's plan, insisting that his people be allowed to stay in the Bitterroot Valley. In return for signing the treaty, Chief Victor received assurances from Stevens that the U.S. president would survey the Bitterroot to determine its suitability as a reservation for the Salish. The promised survey, however, was never conducted.

Roughly 275 Salish refused to leave the Bitterroot Valley for several decades after the Hellgate Treaty was signed. They established farms in the area and stayed until forced to move to the Flathead Reservation in 1891.

"Victor never intended to give up the Bitterroot," says Julie Cajune, a tribal member developing an American Indian history curriculum for Salish Kootenai College. "He believed it would be surveyed and there'd be two reservations, with the Salish remaining in the Bitterroot."

Cajune notes that in addition to the entire concept of treaties being foreign to the Indians, the treaty negotiations were complicated, and the tribes were frustrated by the language barrier.

"There were a lot of problems with translation," says Cajune. "And the Indians at the council didn't know all the ramifications of signing the treaty. They went in thinking it would solve some competition and animosity with other tribes."

Binding agreements

Though the 1855 Hellgate Treaty resulted in a great loss for the Indians, the document has been valuable over the years as recognizing and granting specific rights to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. In agreeing

to the treaties, the tribes became a “domestic dependent nation” under federal law. Courts have consistently held that Indian treaties are binding agreements entered into by the federal government in return for permanent land

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cessions by the tribes. In these documents, the federal government recognizes the limited sovereignty still held by American Indian tribes.

Vernon Carroll is FWP’s state parks interpretive specialist for Montana’s west-central region. He says attorneys for the state and the tribes have in recent years referred to articles in the treaty (in combination with state claims of authority) as the basis for a joint state and tribal agreement to manage nontribal hunting and fishing on the Flathead Reservation. Another example of the treaty’s vitality today, Carroll says, is that its provisions for protecting the tribes’ fishing rights were cited in the recent federal Environmental Protection Agency decision to remove Milltown Dam on the Clark Fork River.

“The Clark Fork runs through the historic homelands of all three tribes, making it important to tribal members,” he says.

Because of their treaty rights, the tribes also received millions of dollars from the Bonneville Power Administration in mitigation for fish and wildlife habitat lost when Hungry Horse Dam was constructed on the Flathead River in the 1950s.

Honoring the tribes

In 2003, Montana honored the tribes by agreeing to the Indians’ request to cast the document in bronze and place it in a memorial at Council Grove State Park.

“When the tribes installed the memorial, they told us they were proclaiming that this site continues to be important to them,” says Doug Monger, head of FWP’s State Parks Division. “We feel it’s important to provide opportunities for park visitors to learn about the treaty and this location and all it meant to changing the lives of those who came before us.”

According to Lee Bastian, FWP west-central region state parks manager, Council Grove State Park was created in 1978 when FWP acquired 186 acres of Clark Fork River bottomland from the George Duseault family. “We had recognized for years the importance of preserving the site because of its historical significance,” Bastian says.

For 25 years, the park’s only acknowledgement of that history was a small, inconspicuous plaque. That changed in 1999 when Cajune, then coordinator of the Ronan school system’s Indian Education Program, was teaching a class at the park. While talking to students about the native perspective of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Cajune noticed the small treaty plaque.

She was shocked, she says, that the old sign incorrectly stated the tribes had given up their hunting and fishing rights in the treaty. (Article 3 of the treaty reserves to the tribes the rights of hunting, fishing, gathering, and grazing on open and unclaimed lands off the Flathead Reservation but within their home territory.) Members of the Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council were equally surprised when Cajune told them about the sign. Tribal elders met with Bastian, and by the following year, plans were under way to create a memorial.

Cajune became the primary organizer of the tribes’ memorial project at the park. She consulted with Salish and Kootenai elders and the tribal culture committees to learn what they wanted on the memorial. “People immediately wanted the display to tell everything—our story from time immemorial,” she says. “But that wasn’t realistic. We finally all agreed that the entire text of the treaty definitely needed to be part of the memorial.”

All 12 articles of the treaty, cast in bronze, became the central panel of the three-panel memorial, mounted on a stone foundation.

The other two panels describe the tribes' history before and after the treaty. One panel shows a map of aboriginal homeland territories without state borders. Drawn by a tribal artist using old maps of aboriginal homelands, the memorial map is intended to dispel a myth about the tribes. In the past, says Cajune, some state

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and federal officials have referred to the Indians as “nomadic,” loosely defined as “wandering aimlessly,” in order to refute tribal claims of home territories.

“The fact is,” says Cajune, “the Salish, Pend d’Oreille, and Kootenai had seasonal movements, passed from generation to generation, where they lived, hunted, or gathered. It was not random wandering. That’s why the map includes different pictures of the specific plants and animals that drew people to those specific locations.”

Other pictures on the memorial panel tell the tribal legends of creation. “We hope they show the general public that this area was an ancient tribal world,” Cajune says.

The third panel on the memorial explains contemporary Indian issues related to the history of the treaty, such as why the tribes have the right to control the natural resources on their reservation. Despite the tribe’s satisfaction in setting the record straight, there was little celebrating when the memorial was officially dedicated in October 2003.

“For many of us, the dedication was a solemn occasion,” says Cajune. “It was a very emotional thing for a lot of people. I know it was for me.”

Tribal elder Johnny Arlee spoke a prayer at the dedication and then related the history of the 1855 council. Cajune says she had mixed emotions afterward. “On one hand, I’m forever grateful that our ancestors were able to save even a small piece of our traditional land,” she says. “But when Johnny talked that day, and the singers sang, I felt a sense of what our ancestors went through when they lost so much of their beloved homeland.”

Today, students on the Flathead Reservation study the history of the 1855 Hellgate Treaty and what it means to residents of the reservation. Cajune says she hopes other teachers in western Montana take their students to Council Grove State Park to learn about the treaty and its historical significance to the state.

Council Grove today

When school groups and others visit the park, they find a place that looks much like it did 200 years ago. As in 1855, the site contains a broad grassland meadow along the Clark Fork River, ringed by weathered ponderosa pines and mature cottonwoods. It’s still an inviting setting for large gatherings.

Bastian says Council Grove is designated as a “primitive” state park, meaning that FWP limits development to preserve its natural characteristics. Besides the memorial, the only facilities are a gravel entrance road, a small parking lot, a half-dozen picnic sites with tables and fire rings, a restroom accessible to people with disabilities, and a few well-defined foot trails.

An island covered with willows, wild roses, cottonwoods, and pines makes up most of the park’s acreage. In summer, visitors can easily reach the island by wading a shallow channel of the Clark Fork. Part of the mile-long island is managed by the U.S. Forest Service as part of the Lolo National Forest.

In addition to being an important historic site, the park hums with quiet recreational activity. “Many people go to the park because it’s an open, natural area,” says Bastian. “It also provides good access to the Clark Fork River. From Missoula, you can be there in 25 minutes and enjoy the wonderful scenery. The whole park is such a neat spot. People who go there can really unwind.”

Those who visit the state park in spring are likely to see other visitors glued to their binoculars, studying the variety of birds attracted to Council Grove's riparian habitat. In summer, expect to see people splashing in the Clark Fork River, picnicking on sandbars, fishing, strolling in the shade of the cottonwoods, and riding horses.

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In the fall, bowhunters are allowed into the park for a few weeks to stalk the river bottom's prolific white-tailed deer. Waterfowlers set up decoys and blinds in the park's backwaters and sloughs.

Rapidly encroaching residential development on nearby land and the gradual loss of the ponderosa pines to age are the main threats to the park. "Housing developments around the park are a major concern," Bastian says. "For a long time, Council Grove has been surrounded by open agricultural fields, which help create the feeling that it is actually bigger than it is. That changes when houses start popping up."

As for the pines, Bastian says they are an essential element of the park's history and cultural significance. "Unfortunately, we've lost some of those big old ponderosa pines to windstorms over the years, and there's not a lot of regeneration," he says.

Missoula groups such as the YMCA, Boy Scouts, and local schools use Council Grove for nature and recreation programs. FWP and other agencies frequently schedule interpretive natural history and cultural activities at the park. Cajune says the Salish and Kootenai tribes plan to use Council Grove to make interpretive presentations on the history of the Hellgate Treaty.

Members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes say it's important to have a sanctioned site where they can tell others about their history. Unfortunately, that history is so bittersweet that some tribal members find it difficult to visit the state park.

"Some people have told me they can't go to the memorial," says Cajune. "It would just be too sad for them, too overwhelming. So yes, it's good that this site has been preserved as a state park. And yes, we have a deep love and attachment to the land that was saved for us. But to many members of the tribe, this is also hallowed ground, the site of a great loss."

Daryl Gadbow is a freelance writer in Missoula.

Council Grove State Park – site of the Hellgate Treaty negotiations

On July 16, 1855, eighteen Flathead, Kootenai, and Upper Pend d'Oreille leaders signed the Hell Gate Treaty with Isaac Ingalls Stevens, governor of Washington Territory. The treaty created the Flathead Reservation in western Montana for the three tribes who were assigned to this reservation .

The Hell Gate Treaty provided the legal foundation for a relationship between the tribes and the federal government. Indians came to talk about peace between the Salish and Kootenai and their enemies, the Blackfeet, not about land cessions or a treaty with the United States, because they saw no reason to "treat with friends" Poor interpreters, conflicting cultural values, and Stevens's short temper and haste created a document that participants interpreted differently. Reservation borders remained vague; tribal leaders believed they signed off land for two reservations, which Stevens knew would not be the case; the provision for "exclusive use and benefit" of the reservation for tribal people proved futile; the provision for Indian hunting and fishing in accustomed places was not followed by Congress; and so on. Stevens had none of this in mind. *(In the Name of the Salish and Kootenai Nation: The 1855 Hell Gate Treaty and the Origin of the Flathead Indian Reservation. Montana: The Magazine of Western History, Summer 2000 by Puisto, Jaakko*

Bitterroot Salish -The Flathead, Salish, Pend d'Oreilles, Kalispel, Coeur d'Alene, Shushwap, and Colville peoples originally lived in this area and spoke the same language. When it became too difficult to feed so large a group, they divided into several different tribes, each developing a slightly different language. Four tribes eventually became members of the Confederacy made by the government treaty of 1855. The lower Pend d'Oreilles and Kalispels who made their homelands in Camas Prairie and St. Ignatius were the first two. They shared hunting grounds to the north with the Kootenais, who were the third tribe involved. The Salish, the fourth major tribe to become treaty participants, were removed from their homeland in the Bitterroot valley after a long, bitter struggle. Although the past has been a long struggle for our parents, grandparents, and ancestors, the Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai cultures and traditions have survived and hope to be stronger in the future.

(<http://www.skc.edu/tribalhistory.html>)

The Salish People have sometimes been referred to as The Flatheads. This is a misnomer that took shape shortly after Lewis and Clark came through the area. The Salish have also been referred to as Bitterroot Salish, in reference to part of their homeland, the Bitterroot Valley, south of the present day Missoula, Montana. In their own language, the people call themselves the Se'lis (pronounced Se'-lish). Salish is the common English rendition of the word and is used in most official tribal documents today (Salish-Pend Oreille Culture Committee, **A Brief History** 6).

The Salish are the easternmost tribe of people who traditionally speak a dialect from the Salishan language family, which extends from Montana all the way to the Pacific Coast and generally on the north side of the Columbia River.

The sprawling aboriginal territory of the Salish straddles both sides of the Continental Divide in what is now the state of Montana. At around 1750-1800, because of losses from epidemics and pressures from rifle-armed Blackfeet, the Salish focused their population into the Bitterroot Valley and the western portion of their overall aboriginal territory. Today the Salish people are based on the Flathead Indian Reservation, a 1.2 million acre area North of Missoula, Montana. The reservation is part of the original homeland of the Pend d'Oreille. There are 6,961 enrolled members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, or this population 4,244 live on the reservation (*Montana Indians: Their History and Location*. Helena, Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2004 p. 28).

Attachment C

<http://www.missoulain.com/articles/2005/08/14/news/local/news06.txt>

Gathering commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Hellgate Treaty

By TRISTAN SCOTT of the Missoulain

It's easy to bandy about words like "truth" and "accuracy" when recounting the history of something momentous.

On Saturday, though, members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation demonstrated the meaning of those words in earnest.

A gathering at Council Grove State Park west of Missoula commemorated the 150th anniversary of the 1855 Hellgate Treaty, whose signing generated outcomes both good and evil.

The mixed tone of the event was testament to the complexity of emotions surrounding the treaty, which provided for the conveyance of 12 million acres of land to the United States in return for 1.25 million acres, a place known as the Flathead Indian Reservation.

"Yeah, we're confined to reservations," said one of the event's key speakers, Louie Adams. "But by golly, we can roam. This is still our home, no matter where we go. Our people are still buried all throughout this great valley. We're home."

The Confederated Tribes of the Flathead, Kootenai and Upper Pend d'Oreille went to Council Groves to meet with Territorial Gov. Isaac Stevens about the problems white settlement posed on their homeland.

The white governor's proposed remedy was the Hellgate Treaty, which chiefs of the three tribes reluctantly signed.

"They were all speaking completely different languages," said Vernon Finley, a language instructor at the Salish Kootenai College at Pablo. "Exactly how much understanding was there as to what was going on?"

Finley said the four men who gathered had opposing world views, and the chiefs had no concept of property or ownership.

"Governor Stevens said, 'I want you to give up claim to owning all of that. In return, you can own the smaller Flathead Reservation,' " Finley said. "The chief didn't understand that concept. How can you own the land? We came from it, and we'll return to it."

On Saturday, Finley stressed the importance of the Salish, Kootenai and Pend d'Oreille tribes to cooperate and unite.

"We are gathered today to sign a treaty with each other," he said. "Those of you from the rez know what I'm talking about. We've got a lot of work to do, but we can pull it together."

Many of the event's speakers, including Finley, thanked the treaty's signatories - Chiefs Victor of the Salish, Alexander of the Pend d'Oreille and Michel of the Kootenai.

"They had the foresight to preserve a little bit so we can be surviving today," Finley said. "Let's keep it up so in another 150 years we'll still be here."

The event's ceremonies opened with flag songs by the Yamnecut Singers and the Chief Cliff Singers.

The Mission Valley Honor Guard posted colors.

A list of "special invited dignitaries" included President Bush, Gov. Brian Schweitzer, Sen. Max Baucus, Sen. Conrad Burns and Rep. Dennis Rehberg.

Council members read letters from Burns and Baucus, and said someone from Bush's office declined the invitation.

Larry Anderson spoke on behalf of Burns.

"We're continuing to learn about each other," he said. "We need to continue to recognize you as sovereign and as members of the United States."

Speakers talked about the importance of Saturday's event, and the need to remember tribal history and educate the public from an American Indian perspective.

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Attachment D

Hellgate Treaty remembered

By SHERRY DEVLIN of the Missoulian

Tribes to dedicate new sign telling 'accurate and appropriate story'

COUNCIL GROVE - The yellow pines were here, scattered across the meadow much as they are today, when the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead, Kootenai and Upper Pend d'Oreille came to this place in July of 1855 to meet with the white governor.

The Indian people wanted to talk to Territorial Gov. Isaac Stevens about the troubles white settlement was bringing to their homeland. Disease. Trespass by settlers, and by hostile tribes. Guns and death.

Stevens had another agenda, unforeseen by Chief Victor of the Salish, Alexander of the Pend d'Oreille and Michel of the Kootenai.

Over the next eight days, tribal leaders became reluctant signatories to the Hellgate Treaty, and the people left Council Grove sad and angry and forever changed.

In their aboriginal homeland of more than 22 million acres, life had been hard, but good. The earth provided all that they needed.

The treaty, though, provided for the conveyance of 12 million acres of land to the United States in return for a reservation of 1.25 million acres, a place known today as the Flathead Indian Reservation.

Other lands, most notably in the Bitterroot Valley, were to be surveyed as potential homelands for the tribes. But that promise by the white leaders was never fulfilled.

And the story of the Hellgate Treaty and its continuing significance to the native people of western Montana fell silent for many generations.

On Saturday, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes will remember and honor the 1855 treaty and dedicate a new sign at Council Grove State Park west of Missoula.

For the first time, the sign will tell "the accurate and appropriate story" of the Hellgate Treaty, said Julie Cajune, who coordinated the project for the Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council.

"For some people, this is a really sad place - a place that symbolizes a time in history they'd rather not remember," Cajune said Friday, as tribal members made preparations for the observance. "Every day, we live with the consequences of what happened here."

But Cajune also comes to Council Groves with "a profound sense of gratefulness to my cultural ancestors, that in an extreme time of stress, they were able to preserve something - a sanctuary - for our people and for the animals and wild places."

The sign project began quietly, four years ago now, with a conversation between Cajune and Cheryl Vanderburg, a public affairs specialist for the Lolo National Forest and a Salish tribal member.

While looking over possible sites for interpretive programs, Vanderburg came across a little sign on the edge of the parking lot at Council Grove.

She was shocked by its description of the Hellgate Treaty as "an agreement by which the Indians relinquished their ancestral hunting grounds in exchange for a reservation in the Mission Valley."

"It simply was not true," Vanderburg said. "The tribes did not relinquish their rights."

In fact, as the effort to create and build a new sign for Council Grove unfolded, all involved realized how little non-Indians know of their Indian neighbors.

Missoula is just 20 miles from the Flathead Reservation, but few residents of Missoula know the story of the Hellgate Treaty or understand tribal sovereignty, Cajune said.

"Indian people are the most unknown and misunderstood minority in America," she said. "It always surprises me."

So the three-panel sign begins at the beginning, with the creation story as told by tribal elder Clarence Woodcock.

"Our story begins when the Creator put the animal people on this earth," said Woodcock. "He sent Coyote ahead, as the world was full of evils and not yet fit for mankind. Coyote came with his brother Fox to this big island, as the elders call this land, to free it of these evils.

"They were responsible for creating many geographic formations and providing good and special skills and knowledge for man to use. Coyote, however, left many faults such as greed, jealousy, hunger, envy and many other imperfections that we know of today."

Everyone involved with the project agreed: The sign needed to convey the long history of tribal inhabitancy, told as tribal elders know the story.

"This is an old tribal world," Cajune said. "We were always here."

A map hand-drawn by tribal member Rosemary Roullier shows the aboriginal lands and a few of their original uses: the great rivers of fish, the places where elk and buffalo were hunted, the favorite bitterroot grounds.

The Salish, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai people had "an intimate knowledge of this sacred landscape" and the people "practiced a complex pattern of movements within the seasonal round," the sign explains.

A second map shows those aboriginal lands with the white man's political boundaries drawn upon them: all of Montana, the northern half of Wyoming, central and northern Idaho, eastern Washington, the western edge of the Dakotas.

The Flathead Indian Reservation is shown, too, as a tiny fraction of the homeland.

The focus of the sign, though, is the treaty itself, which is printed in bronze on the central panel. (Dan Roullier of Ronan made the sign; all funding came from the Confederated Tribes and a number of other public and private donors on the reservation.)

Alongside the treaty is printed an explanation by Dan Decker, a tribal member, attorney and authority on treaty law.

Most contentious of the treaty's provisions is Article 3, Decker tells. In that article, the tribes reserved the exclusive rights of fishing and hunting on the reservation, together with hunting, fishing, gathering and grazing rights on open and unclaimed lands off the reservation, but within their vast aboriginal territory.

So, too, did the treaty and the subsequent Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 provide the basis for tribal self-determination and self-governance, Decker said.

Today, sovereignty is exercised by "a representative form of government, yet governance of the reservation remains in accordance with tribal relations and culture, keeping tribal children and their children in mind, to the seventh generation from today, accounting for the strong religious and environmental stances of the tribes," the sign reads.

And while it was impossible on one sign to say all that tribal members hoped to say, Cajune sees the project as a start.

Now, she will work on a teacher's packet, hoping schools will bring students to Council Groves to walk along the Clark Fork River and beneath the pines, then to sit alongside the sign and learn about the Hellgate Treaty.

Terry Tanner, work projects coordinator for the Salish-Kootenai Wildland Recreation Program, would like to see the 186-acre state park redesignated as an international peace park, jointly managed by the tribes, the state of Montana and the U.S. government.

The state Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks manages the land now.

As Missoula moves farther out into the valley and surrounds Council Groves, its preservation will become ever-more important, Tanner said. "It will take us all to protect this place and keep it pristine."

"This is a place with a story we must preserve and tell," he said, "as it continues to unfold."

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